

GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN WRITING MADE BY STUDENTS OF UIN
ALAUDDIN MAKASSAR: A COMPARISON BETWEEN INDONESIAN
STUDENTS AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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Abstract

This research aimed to analyze the error analysis by using written production test. This technique used in production writing test which is focused on analysis on grammatical items. The objectives of the research are (i) to find out the types of error made by Indonesian students and International students of UIN Alauddin Makassar in writing descriptive text.; (ii) to find out the causing factors of error made by Indonesian students and International students of UIN Alauddin Makassar in writing descriptive text; (iii) to find out the differences and similarities made by Indonesian students and International students of UIN Alauddin Makassar in writing descriptive text. The research employed descriptive research design. The subject consisted of 15 students (5 students each country) which was taken through accidental sampling or convenience sampling technique. The research data were collected through writing text are which was analyzed by using error analysis technique, namely; identification, classification, and statement of error frequency and percentage.

The result of this research shows that (i) the types of error made by Indonesian students and International students in writing descriptive text divided into two main divisions, they are error dealing with the grammatical area such as error are errors in the production of verb, errors in the distribution of verb group, errors in the use of preposition, article, errors in the use of question, and miscellaneous errors. In addition to that there are several subtypes of other errors that consist of other error verb, confusion of part of speech, singular and plural morpheme, pronoun, gerund, Indonesian language, adjective phrase, lexical word, omission/addition of subject, diction, other preposition error. (ii) the causing factors of errors regarding the

students' composition are overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules, and false concept hypothesized. In addition, there is interference as a causing factor and whereas other causes consist of lack of vocabulary and memory limitation. The differences made by Indonesian students and International students of UIN Alauddin Makassar in writing descriptive text based on the result of error analysis and the causing factor are the most dominant errors made by Indonesian students are errors in the use of preposition that cause by false concept hypothesized. The most dominant errors made by International students are; 1) Thai students made dominant errors in the use of article that cause by interference. and dominant errors made by Sudan students are miscellaneous errors that cause by false concept hypothesized. Based on the result of this research, the researcher concludes that the similarities between Indonesian students and International students are they still have a weakness to use correct grammar in the context of their essay.

Keywords: Grammatical errors, error analysis.

Introduction

English is a foreign language. All of human being in the world has a different language. English includes a kind of language that has important role in the human life. English language is a second language (L2) in some countries. That is why English should be learned by people around the world because nowadays it becomes an international language. As EFL learners belonging to the Asian cultural circle, Indonesian, Thai and African cultural circle, Sudan students may exhibit both similarities and differences in their English writing.

Over the decades, there has been a growing number of English academic essay-writing as one of the important skill which students must acquire. One of very vital English language elements is a grammar. The importance of grammar is about the importance of good writing in general, because the two are certainly related.

When the students write or speak, they use of grammar reveals a great deal about their understanding of language and their level of competence in using it. By expressing idea through writing, someone can improve the way of delivering ideas and opinion in more way. That is appropriate since she/he can revise her/his writing before being read by other people, writing is one way to get more information and knowledge, writing helps in learning process.

The four language skills writing are the most difficult skill because people hopefully will be accurate in this skill. As Harmer (1991:53) points out that writing skill is expected to be correct. From the point of view of language teaching, therefore, there is often greater pressure for written accuracy rather than the speaking. Writing is one of difficult skills in English. Students may have not been taught to make their ideas flow on the paper; they do not know how to start writing. They feel stupid when they cannot find suitable words, as well as feel afraid of being criticized when faced a topic and blank paper. It is known that there are many kinds of compositions unfortunately most students cannot differentiate them. Then it makes students fail in making a good composition.

There are at least three factors that may affect students' difficulty in writing they are: 1) lack of knowledge on how to express ideas in the form of writing, 2) lack of background knowledge of what they have to present to the readers, and 3) lack of knowledge about kinds of composition.

When using English, many people are often influenced by their native language structure, they were not aware of those influences. Language interference is a nature phenomenon that occurs in bilingual or multilingual countries. According to Lekova (2010: 320) communication between the two language systems is the reason for the interference which is a negative transfer of language habits and skills from the mother tongue or from a foreign language to another foreign language or is a change in linguistic structures and structural elements.

The interference from mother tongue is one that strongly influences students' composition. Nevertheless, in many assumptions, interference is not the only one that caused student to make errors in writing, there are other factors such as overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules and false concept hypothesized which are part of intralingua and developmental errors. These four causing factors interest the researcher to do a scientific investigation on them. Moreover, the researcher should not at subject's errors as only a negative matter but she should, in contrary see errors as beneficial contribution to the teacher and students themselves. This statement is also supported by Ellis (2003), who says:

“there are good reasons for focusing on errors. First, they are conspicuous feature of learner language, raising the important question of ‘why do learners make errors?’. Second, it is useful for teachers to know what errors learners make. Third, paradoxically it is possible that making errors may actually help learners to learn when they self-correct the errors they make.”

Errors in writing are often found by international students. This work knows that some issues that have become problems in accepting new international students.

Nowadays in UIN Makassar there are some International students that given scholarship. They are from Thailand and Sudan. Starting from 2013 the department of Islamic religion will continue giving scholarship from countries where Muslim is minority, especially Thailand and Sudan. Most of the students given the scholarship are from Islamic boarding schools in Thailand and Sudan. The way to communicate with the Indonesian students in the campus and their new environment is using English. But for the students with less English knowledge background will often produce language interference.

This study benefits the field in applying Error Analysis theory in order to classify errors based on various criteria and attempts to investigate the errors made by the student in composing descriptive text. More specifically, this research focuses on the comparative analysis of errors in English essays between Indonesian students and International students. It aims to describe the types of errors that students make in their writing. Therefore the analysis of learners' language has become an essential need to overcome some difficulties in learning a new language particularly in writing.

Concept of Error

Jenner in Atmowardoyo (1985) explains that the term “error” is taken to mean some idiosyncratic or unnative like piece of language produced by a foreign language learners. This piece of language is produced regularly and systematically. Some errors are typical for groups of learners who have the same mother tongue.

Identifying an error goes beyond explaining what an error is. However, as linguists pay attention to the distinction between an error and a mistake, it is necessary to go over the definition of the two different phenomena.

According to Richard (1992) a student makes a mistake when writing or speaking are due to lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or some other aspects of performance error is the use of linguistic item in a way that a fluent or native speaker of the language regards it as showing faulty or incomplete learning. In other words, it occurs because the learner does not know what is correct, and thus it cannot be self corrected.

To distinguish between an error and mistake, Ellis (2003) suggests two ways. The first one is to check the consistency of learner's performance. If he sometime uses the correct form and sometimes the wrong one, it is a mistake. However, if he or she always uses it incorrectly, it is then an error. The second way is to ask learner to try to correct his or her own deviant utterance. Where he or she unable to, the deviations are errors: where he is successful, they are mistakes.

Division of Error

A number of different categories for describing errors has been identified by some scholars. Firstly, Corder (1974) classifies the error in terms the difference between the learners' utterance and the reconstructed version. In this way, error fall into four categories:

1. Omission of some required element;

2. Addition of some unnecessary or incorrect element;
3. Selection of incorrect element; and
4. Misordering of the elements,

Definition of Error Analysis

The following definitions of error are derived from several views; one of the goals of this writing is to identify the students' error which may be done by means of error analysis. B. Jenner says in Atmowardoyo (1985: 2) Error analysis is most useful for handling the target language. Examination of errors can show how carefully planned explanation can considerably be distorted in the mind of the learner, whose experience and expectations may be quite different from those of the teachers. Consequently, it can give the teacher valuable feedback on his own teaching, what particular strategies are most likely to lead a learner to the making of errors. A study of errors then in the long run point out the way to improve teaching strategies and classroom techniques.

Weber (in Haryanto, 1985: 3) says that "errors may occur in the productive or receptive mode of the written or spoken medium . collection error from both media and modes is possible. However, it is the easiest to collect them from the written texts. Obviously, these will not yield all the errors a learner is making.

Research Questions

Based on the background as previously stated, the researcher formulates the following research question.

1. What types of error made by Indonesian students and International students of UIN Alauddin Makassar in writing descriptive text?
2. What are the causing factors of error made by Indonesian students and International students of UIN Alauddin Makassar in writing descriptive text?
3. What are the differences and similarities made by Indonesian students and International student of UIN Alauddin Makassar in writing descriptive text?

Method and Participants

This research aimed to analyze the error analysis by using written production test. This technique used in production writing test which is focused on analysis on grammatical items. The research employed descriptive research design. The subject consisted of 15 students (5 students each country) which was taken through accidental sampling or convenience sampling technique. The research data were collected through writing text is which was analyzed by using error analysis technique, namely; identification, classification, and statement of error frequency and percentage.

Result

After analyzing the data the researcher can conclude that the grammatical errors made by Indonesian students and International students of UIN Alauddin Makassar in writing descriptive text are about 31 errors of Indonesian students' writing. They are 2 (6.45%) errors in the production of verb, no error in the distribution of verb group, 8 (25.80%) errors in the use of preposition, 2 (6.45%) in

the use of article, no error in the use of question, 4 (12.90%) errors of miscellaneous errors and other errors which 15 (48.38%). There are 52 errors made by Thai students. They are 3 (5.76%) errors in the production of verb, 3 (5.76) errors in the distribution of verb group, 2 (3.84%) errors in the use of preposition, 5 (9.61%) errors in the use of article, no error in the use of question, 1 (1.92%) errors of miscellaneous errors and other errors which 38 (37.07%). There are 49 errors made by Sudan students 1 (2.04%) errors in the production of verb, no error in the distribution of verb group, 1 (2.04%), 3 (6.12%) errors in the use of preposition, 3 (6.12%) errors in the use of article, no error in the use of question, 5 (10.20%) errors of miscellaneous errors and other errors which 36 (73.46%). The researcher can conclude that Indonesian students have low number of error than International students. This caused by International students, in this case Sudan students have more paragraphs to analyze, so that the researcher also can find more errors. Even though Thai students did not have more paragraphs, but they have more errors from the using of article. Based on this explanation we cannot conclude that Sudan students have a weakness in grammar comprehension than the other students.

There are several causes of error found of Indonesian students and International students. The causing factors consist of overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules, and false concept hypothesized. In addition, there is interference as a causing factor and whereas other causes consist of lack of vocabulary and memory limitation. The causing factors found of Indonesian

students are false concept hypothesized becomes the most dominant causing factor of errors with 58.06% then followed by ignorance of rule restrictions with 16.12%, memory limitation 9.67%, overgeneralization 6.45%, while the least dominant causing factor is possessed by incomplete application of rule and lack of vocabulary with 6.45% or only two errors found. The causing factors found of Thai students are interference becomes the most dominant causing factor of errors with 25% then followed by false concept hypothesized with 19.23%, ignorance of rule restrictions with 15.38%, memory limitation 15.38%, overgeneralization 13.46%, while the least dominant causing factor is possessed by incomplete application of rule and lack of vocabulary with 5.76% or only 3 errors found. And the last causing factors found of Sudan students are false concept hypothesized becomes the most dominant causing factor of errors with 40.81% then followed by memory limitation with 24.48%, incomplete application of rules 12.24%, ignorance of rule restriction with 10.20%, interference 6.12%, lack of vocabulary with 4.08%, while the least dominant causing factor is overgeneralization with 2.04% or only one error found. Based on interview, the researcher can conclude that the Indonesian students and International students have different comprehension in using English grammar. This caused by their educational background and their mother tongue.

Conclusion

The differences made by Indonesian students and International students of UIN Alauddin Makassar in writing descriptive text based on the result of error analysis and the causing factor are the most dominant errors made by Indonesian

students are errors in the use of preposition that cause by false concept hypothesized and the number of all errors are 31 errors. The most dominant errors made by International students are; 1) Thai students made dominant errors in the use of article, that cause by interference and the number of all errors: 52 errors. 2) and dominant errors made by Sudan students are miscellaneous errors that cause by false concept hypothesized and the number of all errors: 49 errors. Based on interview, the researcher can conclude that the similarities between Indonesian students and International students are they still have a weakness to use correct grammar in the context of their essay. The main difficulty of the students is the using of a verb in their essay, how to choose an appropriate preposition and article, how to place of verb in the right place in structure of sentence. This fact shows that Indonesian students and International students have same difficulties in writing English descriptive text even though they come from different country.

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